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C O N F I D E N T I A L WARSAW 003613

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/17/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [BO](#) [PL](#)

SUBJECT: POLAND: U.S. POLICY TOWARD BELARUS

REF: A. STATE 188900

[1B](#). WARSAW 3520

[1C](#). VILNIUS 1076

Classified By: Political Counselor Mary Curtin, reasons 1.4b,d

[11](#). (C) We shared reftel (A) demarche points with Polish MFA officials October 12 and 13, highlighting the results of our policy review and our determination to coordinate closely with partners in support of Belarusian democracy. Polish officials indicated that Poland shares the broad outlines of U.S. policy and welcomes our robust approach, which includes action on a number of fronts. The Poles evinced interest in our thinking on a possible message to Lukashenko, which we emphasized would be exceptional and well-coordinated in advance.

[12](#). (C) Asked about Poland's decision to return its ambassador to Minsk that week, MFA Deputy Director for Eastern Europe (DAS equivalent) Wojciech Zajaczkowski confirmed that the Poles had been looking for a reason to send Ambassador Pawlak back to Belarus, and that the Lukashenko regime's willingness to host the opposition candidate selection provided them with that excuse. "Recalling the ambassador sent an important signal," Zajaczkowski stated, "but over time it became clear that his absence was hurting us more than the regime." Zajaczkowski noted also that Belarusian state security chief Neviglas appears to have kept a promise to Polish NSA Bahr (ref B) and reined in the KGB a bit (although anti-Polish attacks continue to appear in state-run Belarusian media, he said).

[13](#). (C) Zajaczkowski and MFA Belarus desk officer Mariusz Krajewski inquired about our reaction to Belarusian PM Sidorski's recent meetings in Vilnius, which both characterized as "surprising." Drawing on our earlier read of ref (C), we reported that we and the UK (as EU presidency) had demarched the Lithuanians and underscored our concern about this breach of common policy. We explained that the episode reinforces the importance of maintaining a closely coordinated and unified approach to such contacts.

[14](#). (C) On the external broadcasting project, Zajaczkowski welcomed news of our decision to provide some initial funding to ERB (European Radio for Belarus), intimating that our support could help tip the Polish government's tender and its \$300,000 in support toward ERB. Informed of the Czech government's intention to fund ERB as well, Zajaczkowski indicated that the Poles would approach the remaining Visegrad Group member states for similar pledges the following week. Zajaczkowski stated that he regretted the technical delays created by the tender process, but assured us that he remains confident that the new Polish government (due to enter office by the end of October) will back the radio project "enthusiastically."

ASHE